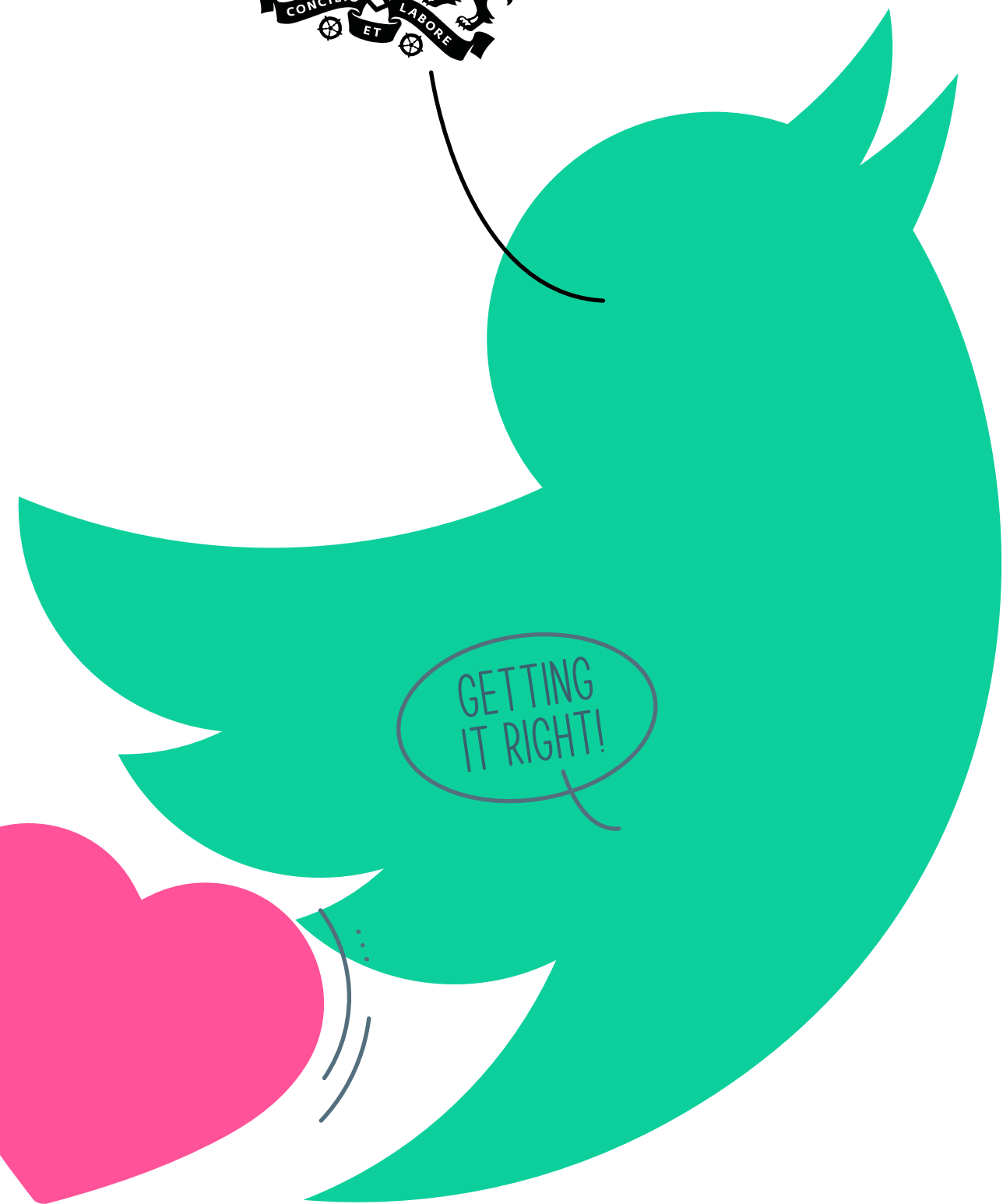
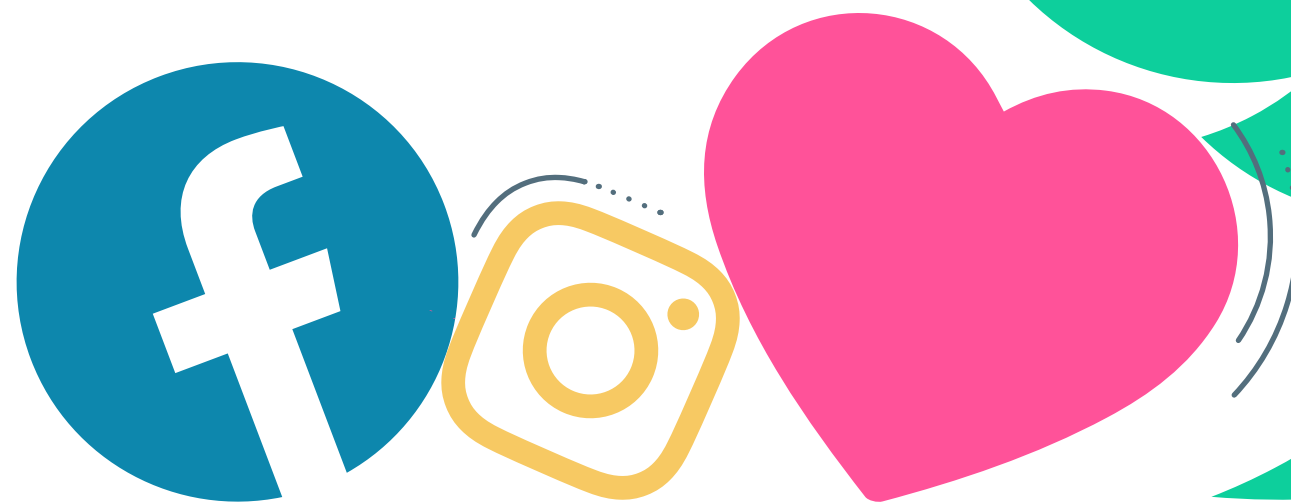


# Like & Share

\\  
MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL  
SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY  
/\\



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# Look who's talking!

Over the past ten years, social media has transformed the way we, as a council, communicate and engage with residents, businesses, partners and visitors. Our social media channels enable us to speak directly to our audiences and get involved in two-way conversations with a human, non-corporate voice.

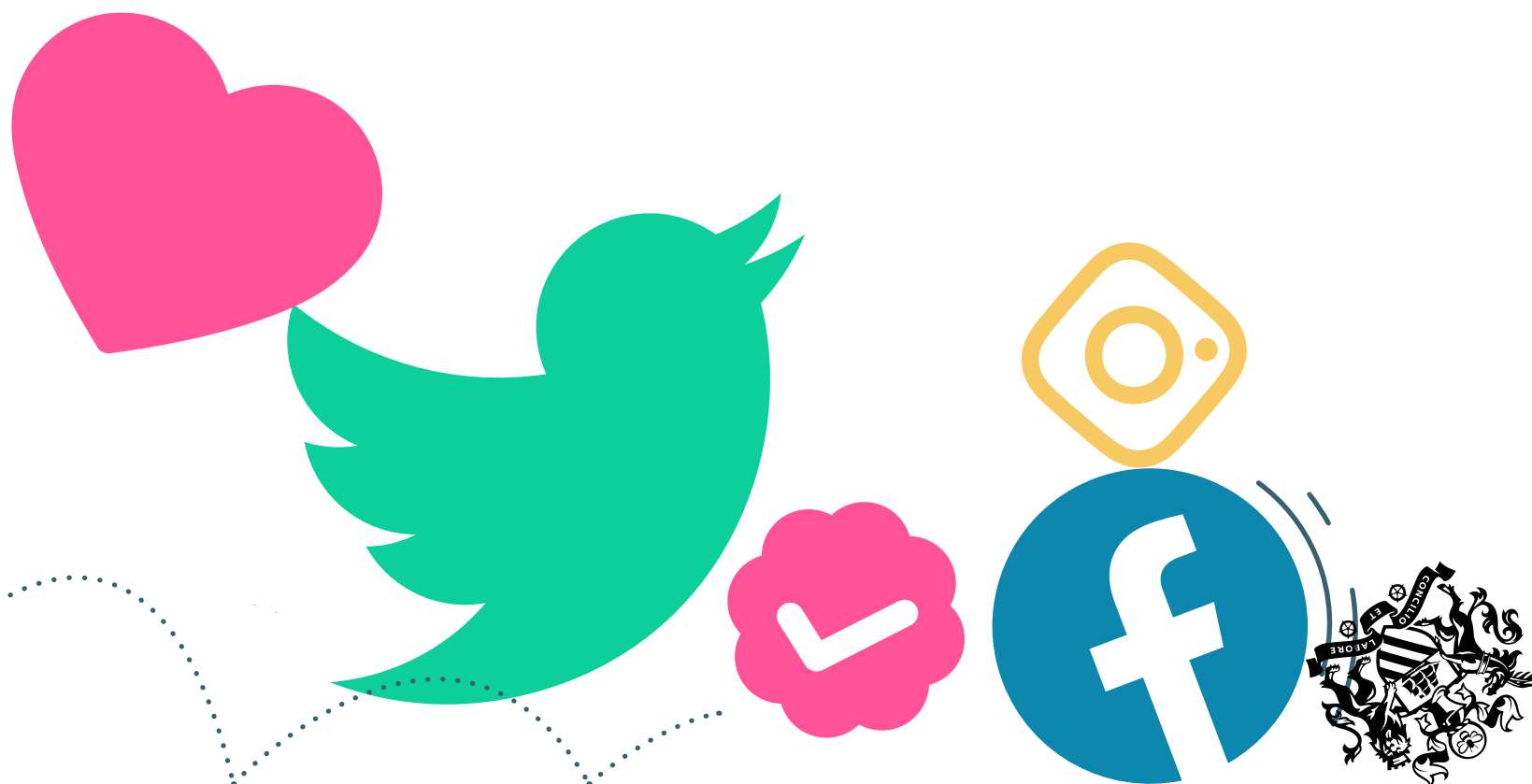
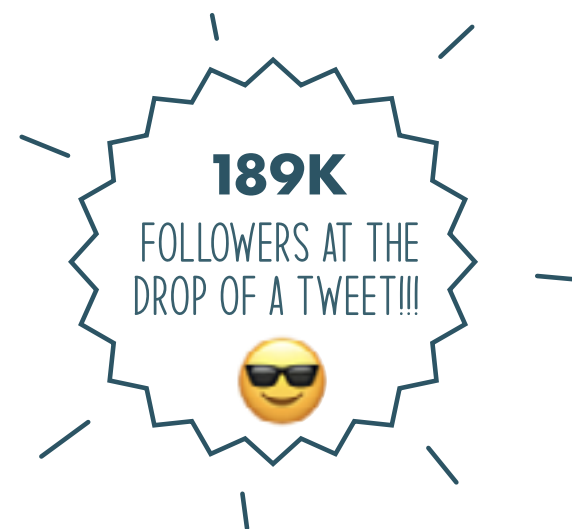
Social media is now the main platform for our residents receiving information and news from us. Our channels have grown organically over time, keeping residents more connected than ever. This is something that has been put into sharp focus during the COVID-19 pandemic, as people spend more time at home and online.

Social media is so ingrained in our communications approach that it's hard to imagine a time when we couldn't speak directly to Manchester residents at the drop of a tweet. Our channels are an extension of the Manchester City Council brand. We're really proud of the work we have done to build our social media audience, and even prouder of the ongoing conversations we have with residents.

ADAPT, RESPOND  
& LOOK

Social media platforms are ever-increasing and so is the number of people using them. People are also using them differently, so we can't rest on our laurels; we need to adapt, respond and look at how we can do even better to manage our social media successfully. With Twitter and Facebook now deemed 'traditional social media', things have come a long way since we first dipped our toe in the world of social back in 2009; the digital landscape is constantly shifting and we must move and adapt with it to fully benefit from the opportunities it offers.

There will be key learnings and changes that inform this strategy in the future. This is a continually evolving strategy that will adapt with the ever-shifting social media landscape. We will respond to changes as they happen and adapt our approach using new tools and insights as they become available. We must be fluid enough to react quickly to continue improving engagement, conversations with residents and, of course, outcomes.



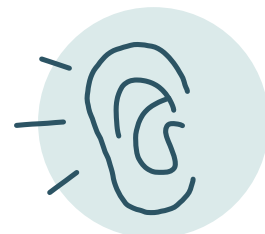
This strategy is underpinned  
by key behaviours of...

## Our Manchester



### Better lives

It's about people!



### Listening

We listen,  
learn and respond!



### Recognising strengths

...of individuals and communities.  
We start from strengths!



### Working together

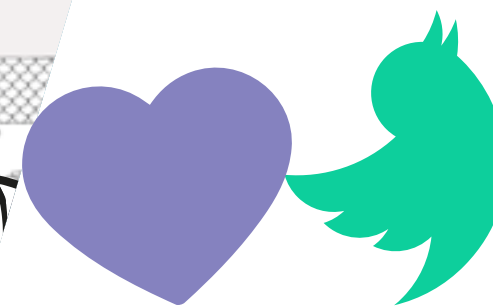
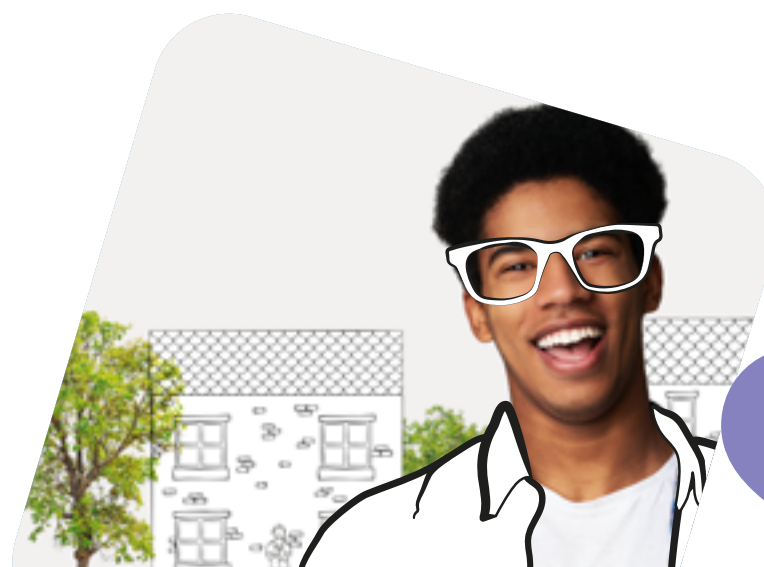
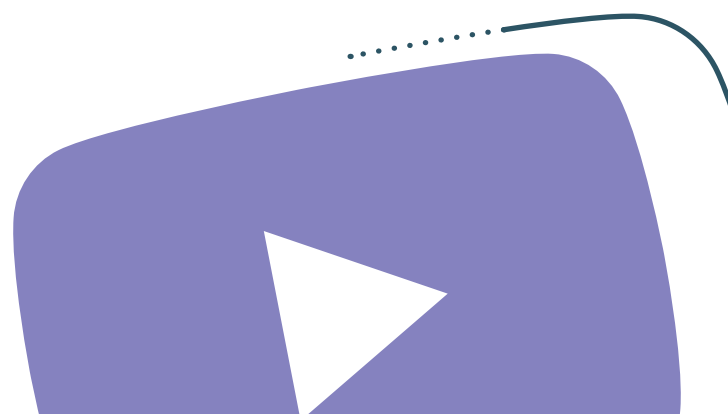
We build relationships  
and create conversations!

THIS IS WHY  
WE DO  
WHAT WE DO!

# Objectives

This Social Media strategy supports digital innovation and the core objectives in the Communications Strategy. These are:

- Delivering communications that recognise Manchester's diverse audiences, targeting to their needs, preferences and location
- Identifying communication opportunities that take advantage of digital lifestyles in the city, where people are talking
- Developing communications that recognise and use the tools and voices available to us
- Supporting councillors and staff with the tools to act as advocates for the Council and the city.



This strategy outlines our approach to engage and communicate with people who live, work, visit or do business here. Our objectives are to:

- **Develop a tone of voice** for the Council that encourages conversation and engagement, and keep this tone of voice consistent to build trust
- **Add humanity and humour** to stimulate conversation where and if appropriate, finding the right balance between being formal and informal
- **Know our advocates** and effectively utilise their voice
- **Set an agreed protocol** and governance framework to shape a consistent approach to how we use our social media channels

ADD  
HUMANITY  
AND  
HUMOUR

- **Focus on quality** over quantity
- **Know what content needs to be polished**, and know when using free software platforms such as CANVA is sufficient
- **Increase engagement** and be outcome-focused
- **Ensure all our messages are truly targeted** at the intended audience (whether organic or paid for)

- **Listen** to what people are saying (or not saying) on social media
- **Build valued relationships** with our community networks, partners and key influencers
- **Build a trusted relationship** with our online audience
- **Share learnings and tips** across the team and with Council members and colleagues
- **Create a regular dashboard** that effectively measures outcomes, and use the intelligence this provides for future learnings
- **Acknowledge when social media isn't the best approach** and recommend other communications approaches.

BUILD AUDIENCE  
RELATIONSHIPS



SHARE

OUTCOMES  
OUTCOMES  
OUTCOMES



# What a voice! 🗨️

Our social-media audience is big. We have one of the biggest local authority followings in the country:

# 320,600

TOTAL FOLLOWERS ACROSS SOCIAL NETWORKS

**26.9k**  
ON LINKEDIN

**595**  
ON YOUTUBE

Manchester City Council is a known, liked and trusted source of information, and we are proud of having built up such a strong following. However, we need to acknowledge that only a percentage of these figures are local people (our residents) – the audience we need to be reaching. Our messages need to be engaging the people who live in, work in and visit Manchester – those who need to access the services and support we provide to improve their lives.

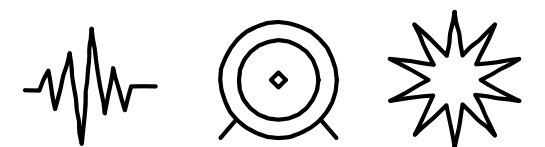
To effectively reach those Manchester residents and deliver messages that resonate with them we need to change the way we are using our social-media accounts. Although we have made a lot of progress in moving away from a broadcast model of communicating on social media, we need to do more to listen, target and engage. We will do this through a mix of organic and paid-for social media delivered to the right place at the right time and on the right platform.

**16.8K**  
ON INSTAGRAM

**87K**  
ON FACEBOOK

**189.9K**  
ON TWITTER

WE NEED TO DO MORE TO



**LISTEN, TARGET, ENGAGE!!!**

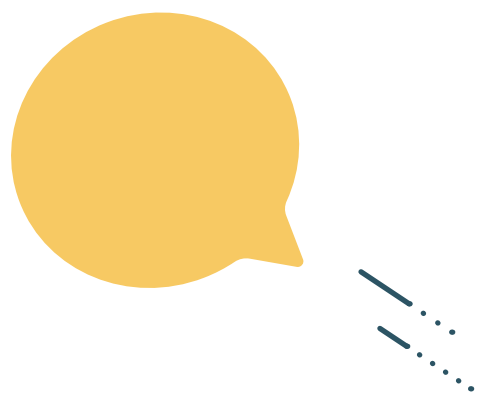


Our social media needs to be social. It is an extension of our brand. Engagement activity will be an ongoing conversation with our target audience and include content that means something to them – content they can relate to. Our feeds shouldn't be a stream of call-to-action posts.

We will have a human voice and not be afraid of sharing 'audience identity content' that will simply make our audience smile; the content will encourage them to react and share. This audience-identity content will allow us to strike a balance between asking people to do things/sign up to things, and simply having a positive conversation with us. We will work towards sharing one piece of audience-identity content for each call-to-action post.

This balance will allow us to drive engagement, build trust and interest in what we are saying, and get people talking. It will boost our ratings with the algorithms so that when we do have a clear call-to-action message to get across, our posts will be seen in the feeds we want them to be seen in. We will be more clever, and when it allows, funnier – but acknowledging that we still have a job to do as the Council. There will be a balance.

LET'S MAKE OUR AUDIENCE  
**SMILE!**



We will focus monthly content plans around five key message streams:



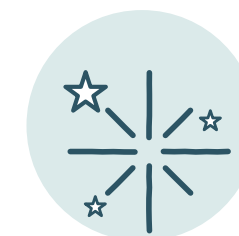
**Behaviour change**

Health, exercise, recycling



**Democratic voice**

Consultations, organisational priorities and service updates



**Life moments/  
Milestones**

Christmas, Mother's Day, exam results



**Lifestyle**

Celebrating our city and what it has to offer



**Human**

Sharing a unique human voice, being Mancunian, and adding our famous humour where appropriate.



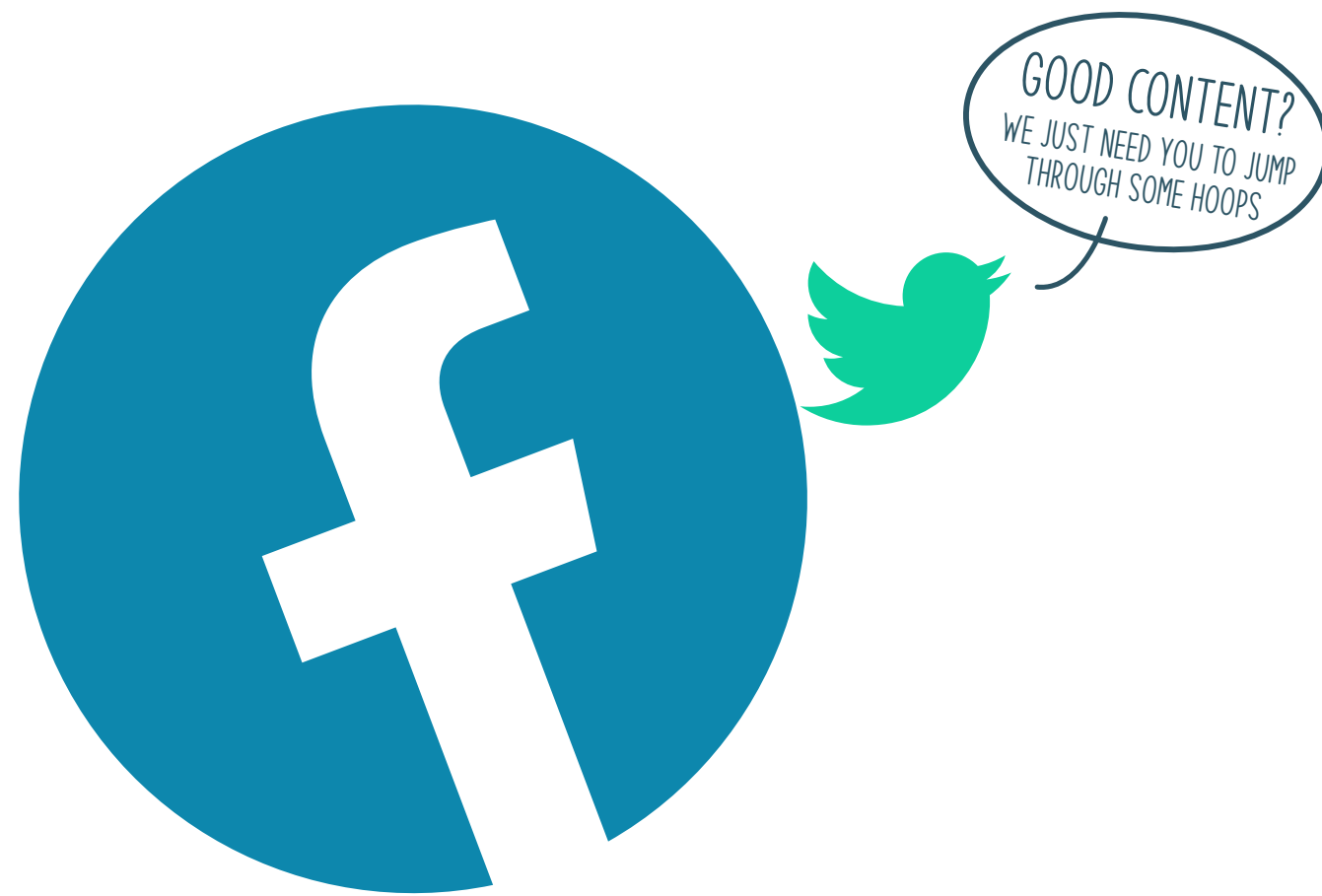
# Algorithms

So we've got 320,600 followers on social media; that means 320,600 people see our content – right? Wrong. Each social media platform has algorithms, and those algorithms make choices about what each person will see on their home feed.

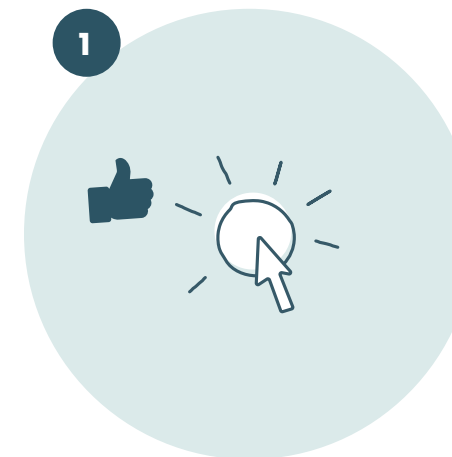
Algorithms teach us about good content and reach.

These algorithms vary from platform to platform but there is a lot of commonality across them all. Algorithms are crucial to this social media strategy and crucial to our audiences seeing and engaging with our content.

Here is a general picture of how algorithms work across platforms and how a piece of content might be affected by them.



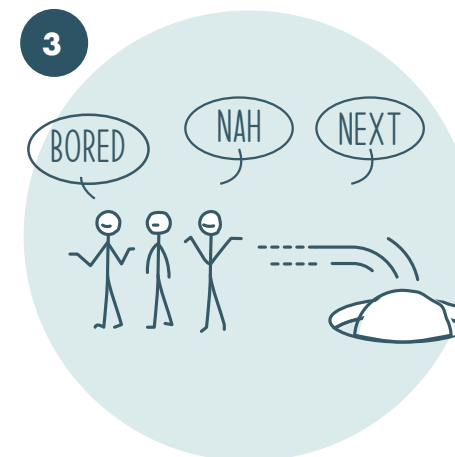
## Something like this!



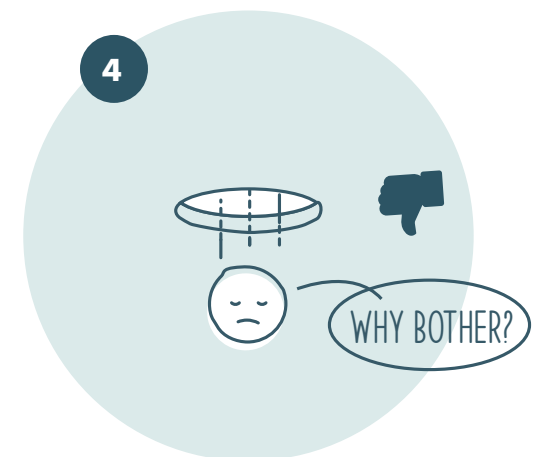
1  
You post something. Well done! But don't be too confident.



2  
The platform throws it to a tiny sample of your **MOST ENGAGED** viewers.



3  
If it doesn't get shares, likes, comments etc from even the most engaged of your followers, it gives up on your post, and shows **NOBODY** else.



4  
Just like that. Dead in the water – and it gets worse. The algorithm will penalise your unengaging post further, by showing your next post to an **EVEN SMALLER** sample.

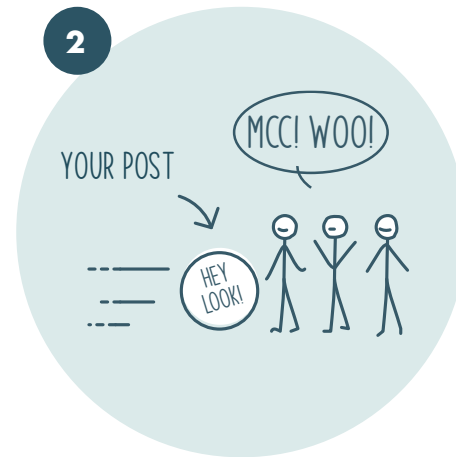




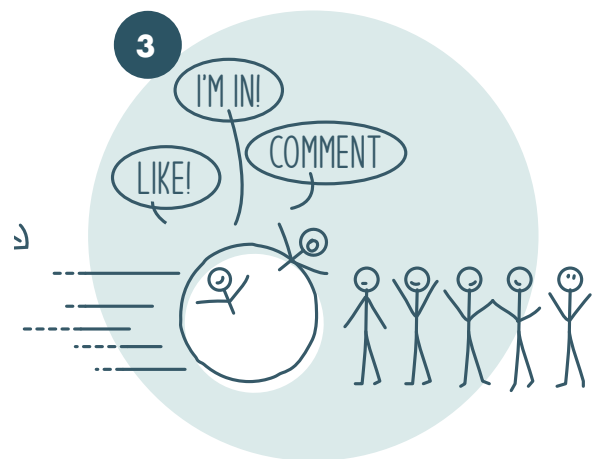
## Or maybe like this!



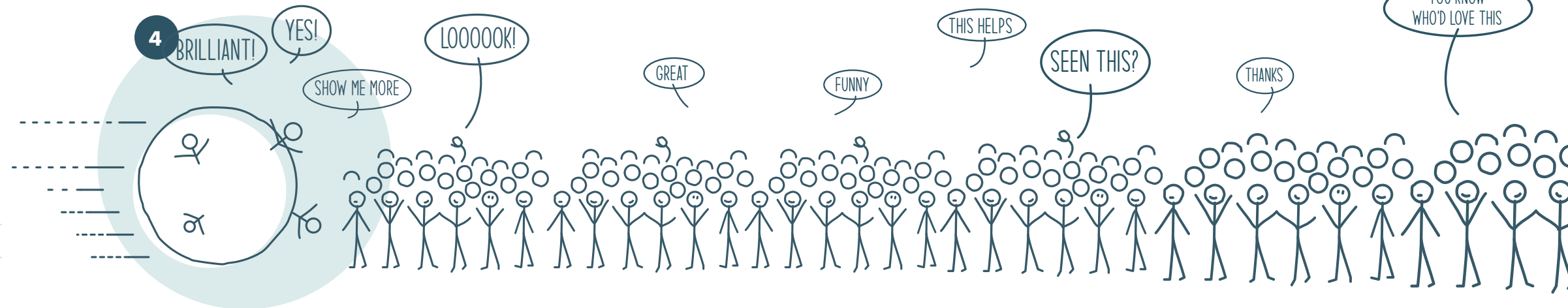
You post something.  
Well done!



The platform throws it  
to a tiny sample of your  
**MOST ENGAGED** viewers.



It catches on! It gains traction with  
that small sample. They pass it on,  
hover, look or – even better – do  
active things like comment,  
share and like your post.



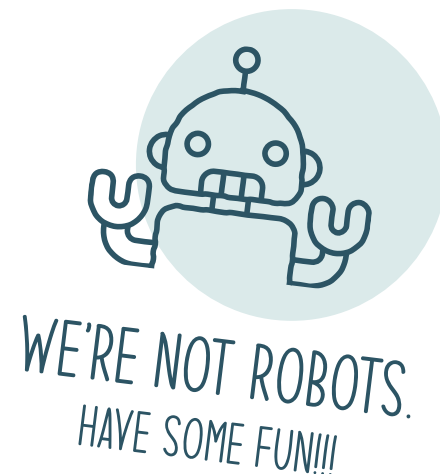
It sees your content getting attention and  
keeping people on the platform. It shows  
your content to another selection of your  
followers, and if they engage with it, it'll  
be shown to more and more people.  
It snowballs until your post goes viral.  
Your post is massive!



# How we do it

## 1. Tone of voice

We will establish a strong and consistent tone of voice across our social-media channels. Our tone of voice will inform all our planned social-media messaging, both organic and paid, as well as our responses to residents' queries or concerns. A tone of voice is not what we say, but how we say it, and it should embody and express our personality and values.



We need a voice that is distinctive, recognisable and unique. This voice is a crucial part of building trust with our audience and will encourage conversation and engagement with our residents. Our tone of voice will position us within the Manchester conversation, allowing us to listen and adapt, and ensure our important messages are shared with residents in a way they understand and enjoy.



Consistency in our use of language and style across our social-media channels is crucial to this, and it needs to be clear what we stand for.

### **We are proud**

We want to shout about all our city has to offer and encourage people to visit and do business here. We love Manchester and the people who live in it. We are ambitious. We are Mancs and proud of it.

### **We are inclusive**

We love how culturally diverse our city is. We welcome and celebrate residents and visitors from all religions and backgrounds.

### **We are confident**

We are confident and sure of ourselves, and we have a bit of Manchester swagger but we aren't annoying.

### **We are informed**

We know Manchester inside out and we know our residents. We do our research and we get our facts straight before we post.

### **We are honest and transparent**

We are honest with our residents, but we are human and admit when we've made mistakes.



### **We are funny**

We are up for a laugh and aren't afraid to use humour or be a bit cheeky. We judge the mood though, and know where to draw the line.

### **We are supportive**

We aren't out of touch. We know people have it hard and we acknowledge their struggles. We are here to help and give people the tools they need to access support services. We help one another. We want to improve the lives of the people who live in Manchester.

### **We are available**

We have a strong social-media presence. We are here to listen, engage with our residents and take on board their concerns.

### **We are Manchester**

We are ambitious and are on our way to becoming a top-flight world-class city by 2025.



## 2. Quality over quantity

Historically, we have posted a lot of content – often the same content – on our two main channels: Facebook and Twitter. We recognise the need to reflect on the amount of content we produce and post, and we shouldn't be afraid to acknowledge that not all content is relevant to all our audience.

Too many messages can disengage people. We will evaluate each of our platforms and make sure we are delivering content that is appropriate to each – content that will engage each audience and lead to improved outcomes (direct action such as link clicks, sign-ups etc).

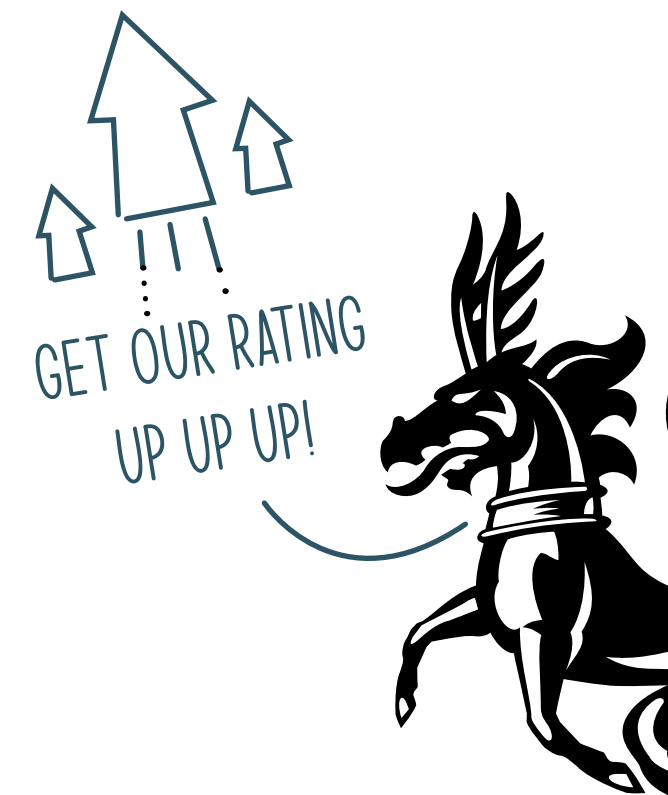
Campaigns do not necessarily need extensive content plans prescheduled for months at a time. Good-quality posts that speak to our audience where we know they are engaging are far more effective. Our audience will disengage if we continue to flood our channels with too much content. It is more important now than ever to respond to our audience's behaviour on social media. We need to be flexible and not stick to rigid schedules.

TOO MUCH IS  
BORING!

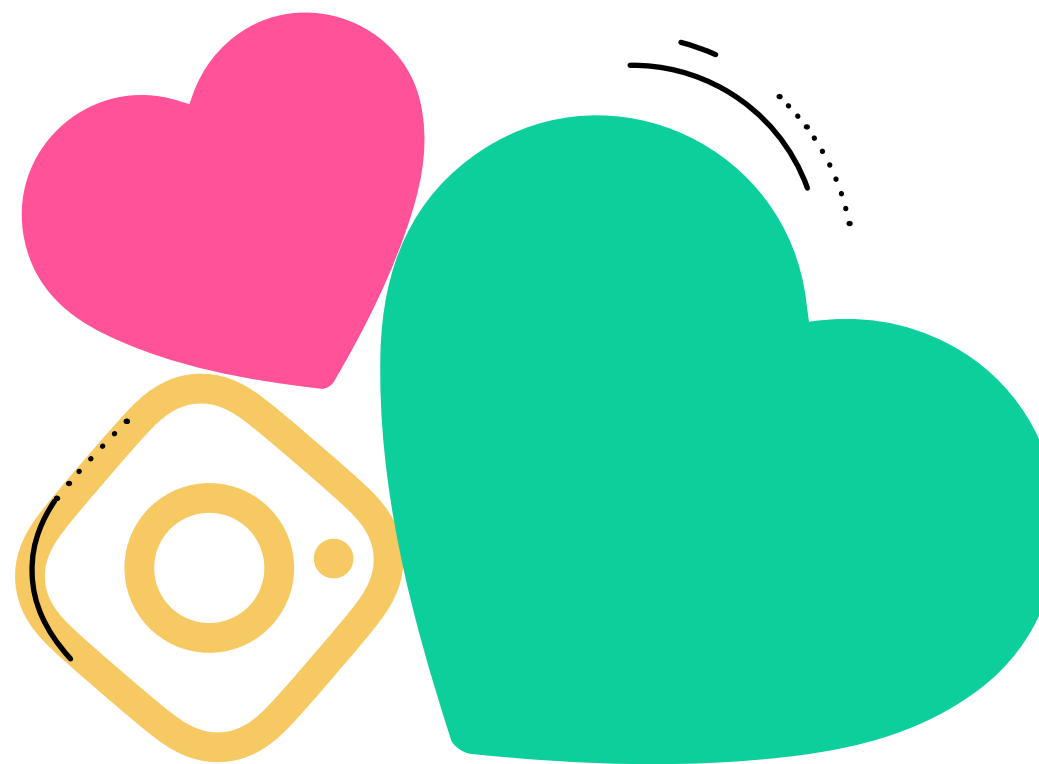
QUALITY WINS!

### Beating the algorithms

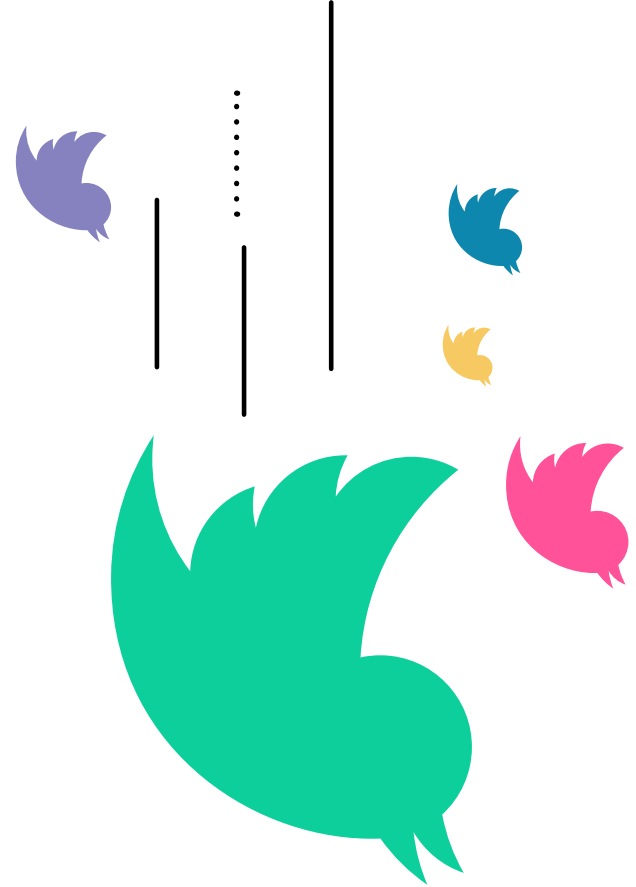
On top of our audience losing interest, scheduling a lot of content that doesn't get engagement has a negative effect on social-media algorithms. These algorithms are there to make sure people see the most exciting and talked-about content. Every time we post something that doesn't get engagement, our rating goes down and subsequent content is shown to a smaller percentage of our audience. Continuing to produce the same amount of content is lose lose, so we need to strip things back.



We will look at the platforms we are using and how we are using them. This means thinking beyond the 'Twitter, Facebook, maybe LinkedIn' trap we have fallen into. While Facebook reigns consistently as the most popular social-media platform in the UK, new platforms are emerging all the time. We know we can reach different sections of our audience by using our existing channels differently and by learning to utilise new channels that harder-to-engage groups are familiar with.



Twitter is one of our main corporate accounts and we will continue to focus on the platform, but we know that its popularity is decreasing nationally and globally. While it is still an important place for communicating corporate updates with journalists and partners, we need to acknowledge that it isn't the place where we are going to speak effectively to large numbers of residents. Figures show that while still popular, Twitter is not the go-to social media for young or older people. Facebook continues to be the platform that over-16s can't live without, while Snapchat is growing in popularity and is the main social media for under-16s in the UK. We will respond to these trends by using data and insights to shift our focus to deliver real outcomes.



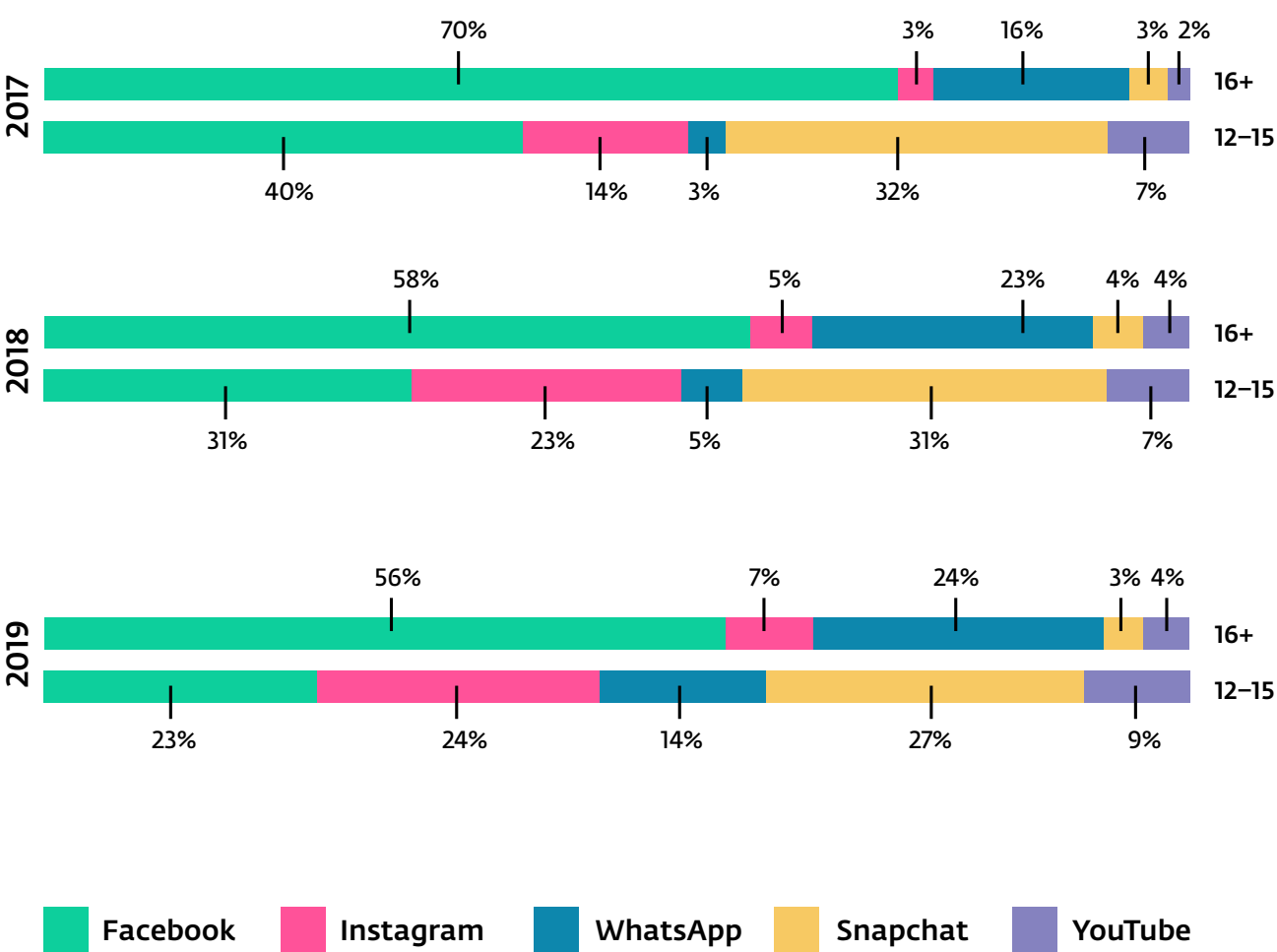
YOUNGER PEOPLE  
CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT  
FACEBOOK!

Top ten social-media sites, by reach of the online population: November 2019 ,

Rank	Top Social Media Sites	Reach of online population	Average time spent per visitor (minutes:seconds)
1	Facebook and Messenger	95	23:03
2	Instagram	60	04:41
3	WhatsApp	60	07:07
4	Twitter	54	03:45
5	Pinterest	36	01:51
6	LinkedIn	32	01:56
7	Snapchat (mobile app)	26	21:17
8	Reddit	23	02:30
9	Blogger	16	00:09
10	TikTok	10	15:57

Source: Comscore MMX Multi-Platform, Adults 18+, November 2019, UK

Platform considered as main social-media profile/account by year and age: 2017–2019



Source: Ofcom Adults' Media Literacy and Children's Media Literacy Tracker

### Less is more

Producing less content and taking a more targeted approach will inevitably mean councillors and colleagues across the Council, as well as sections of our audience, won't see some of our content. We won't post everything on our corporate accounts; we'll use insights and audience intelligence to target our messaging on platforms our audience uses. This will lead to improved outcomes and give our team more time to create better content that will drive better engagement.

We will invest our time where our audience connects, choosing the spaces we want to be in and how we connect with our audience in those spaces. We will do more to understand our audience, do things differently with our existing channels, and explore new channels.



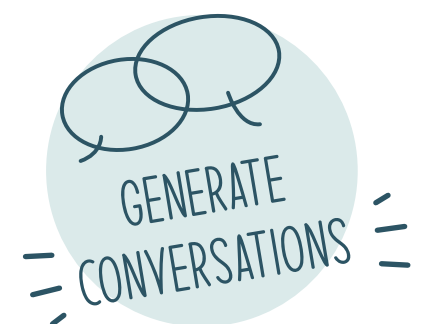
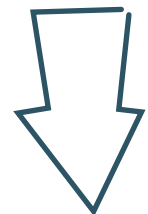
### Our focus:

**Facebook** – We will continue our work to deliver our messages to the right people at the right time by taking advantage of key contacts/admins in closed community groups. We will create less but better content for our own corporate feed. With a real focus on generating conversation and engagement, this will help us to get positive results against social-media algorithms and ultimately reach a wider audience.

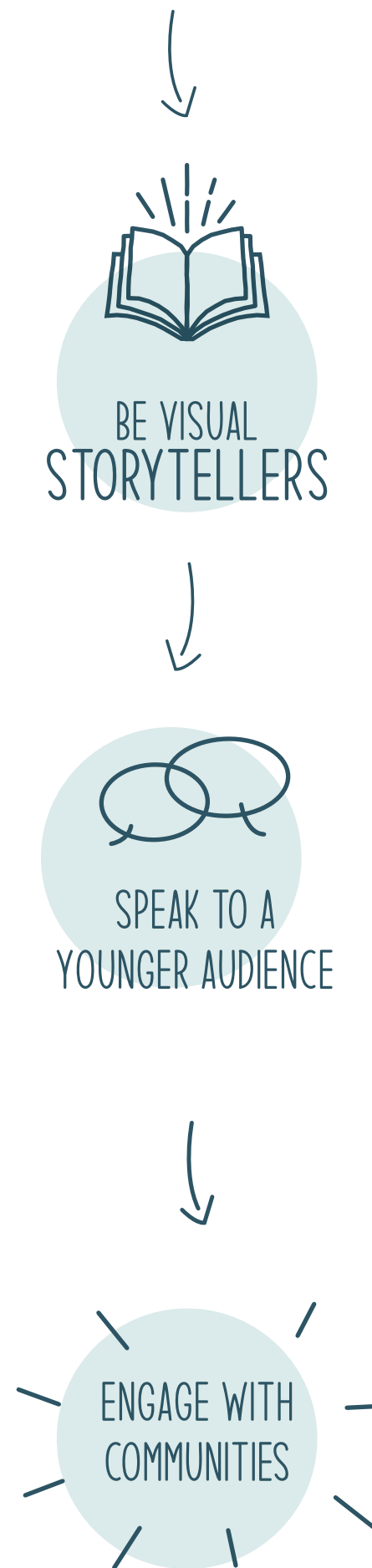
**Twitter** – We will continue to be part of the ongoing Manchester conversation, working more with partners, networks, active groups and individuals to amplify and share one another's content and adapting and responding to the news agenda as needed. Again, this will create less but better and more timely content for our own feed.

**LinkedIn** – We will be thought leaders and use our voice to share longer-form pieces that position us at the heart of important debates and discussions. There is a lot of potential for engagement here, particularly with the business community.

GET IT RIGHT ON ALL  
PLATFORMS AND WE'LL...







**Instagram** – We will be visual storytellers and start to carefully curate so that this channel isn't an afterthought. Instagram is the perfect place to showcase the amazing work of our studio and share images that celebrate our amazing city while getting important messages across.

**Snapchat** – We will target a younger audience. We have done some work during the pandemic to target a younger audience with paid activity on this platform. We will take the learning and build on this.

**TikTok** – Work is starting to build this channel, and we are learning how to use it appropriately and in a way that will resonate with our audience both organically and paid.

**WhatsApp** – Successful work has been done to create content for community networks to share on this platform during the pandemic. We will build on this and start to look at how we can use this platform centrally to get messages to our audience.

We are currently undertaking an audit of our social-media channels to gather insight on what content our audience is engaging with and how. We are tracking the volume of outbound content and comparing and contrasting this statistic against engagement metrics (such as retweets and comments). This will give us a sense of what content is working for the channels and what isn't, as well as what is encouraging them to react or take action. This will be an ongoing piece of work ingrained in our ways of working in the future, and we will include an update in our monthly dashboard. We will be constantly reviewing our delivery to make sure our messages are resonating with our audience.

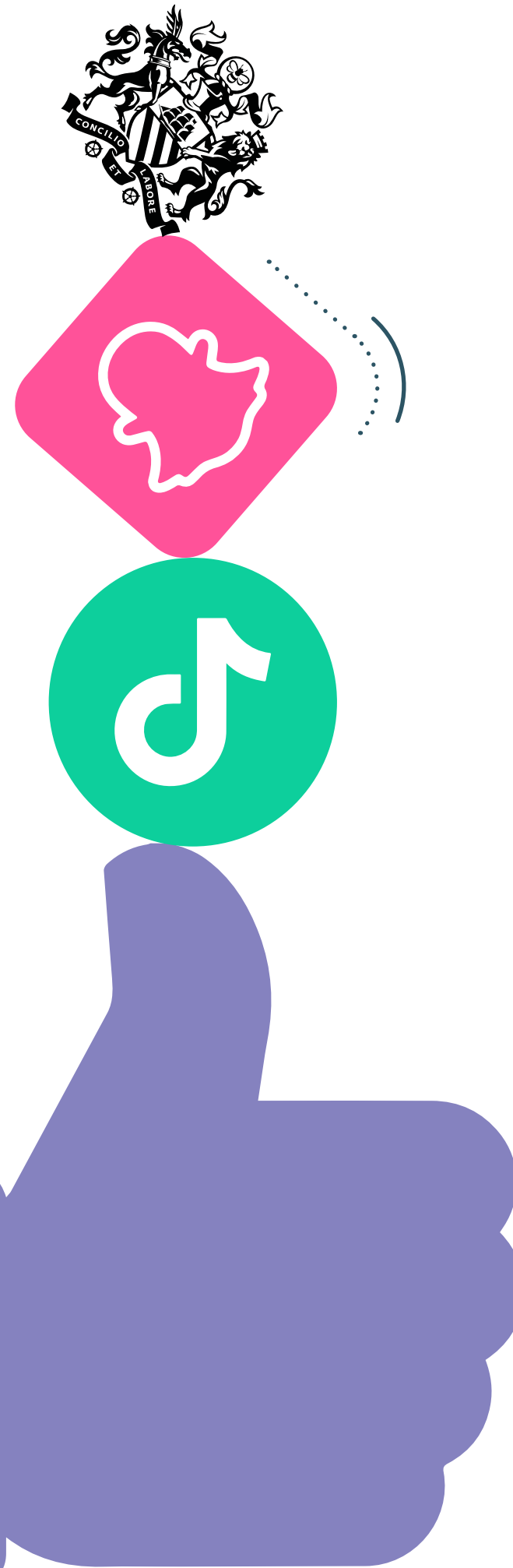
### Beyond social

We will also acknowledge where social media isn't the best approach and use other communication channels when we know they will have more impact. Email marketing through Gov.delivery is a strong example of this. We will be working on improving and expanding our use of this platform alongside this strategy to ensure we are reaching all our audience in the most effective and targeted way. This platform has become increasingly important during the pandemic; we began a COVID-19 update e-bulletin in March 2020, which now has over 5,000 active subscribers. We will continue to use this digital-first approach with other key services, such as bin updates, waste and recycling information, and promotions for our residents.



### 3. Social listening

To be part of a conversation with our audience and ensure our messages cut through, we need to build on our social listening. Focused social listening will allow us to understand the conversations our audiences are having across social media and track key influencers and partner accounts. We are responding to these insights, so we put out content our audience wants to see, where it wants to see it. This will improve the experience of our social content and generate ideas for future campaigns. This is an area where all local authorities need to improve, and we will work hard to build on our social-listening skills here in Manchester.



#### Looking forward

We currently use the management tool Orlo to schedule social-media content, engage with our audience, respond to queries, and evaluate our campaigns. However, we need to utilise more of what Orlo has to offer including its social-listening tools. We will listen to what our audience is talking about (or when it comes to particularly vocal groups, what they are not talking about) and adapt what we are speaking to them about accordingly.

#### Learning

While we don't have competitors, we do need to pay attention to what our counterparts in other local authorities and more broadly in the public and private sector are doing; we also need to know what's performing well and what creative treatments they are using. This will play an important part in our ongoing social listening, enabling us to learn from other organisations with similar objectives.

To complement this, the social-media team are all members of the PRCA and of Public Sector Comms Headspace, where campaign ideas and creative approaches to social content are regularly discussed. We will also start to build relationships with social-media teams across our core cities and look at creating a space where we can share knowledge and ideas.





GROUPS HELP US  
REALLY TARGET AUDIENCES



## 4. Community networks

We will continue to build meaningful relationships within our communities and not expect people to come to us. We need to go to them where they are, and use the support of our partners, community groups and peers that people trust. Although we have made some strides to do this and have started to engage our community networks, there is still a lot more to be done.



### The power of Facebook groups

Facebook groups are a key area of focus here. COVID-19 has increased the use of and reliance on digital communications to connect, and communities have come together online to resolve neighbourhood issues and support one another where they can't physically be together. The pandemic has shown the power of community networks, the reach we have and who people trust. This is particularly notable in closed Facebook groups.

Changes to the platform's algorithms in early 2020 have also played a part in the growth of the closed Facebook group. Content from public groups is now placed into your news feed if it is relevant to things you are interested in. Groups that were once niche areas now offer an opportunity to reach far beyond their membership. The Facebook group is now a place where we can deliver impactful and targeted communications that people will take notice of – something that will carry on far beyond COVID-19 restrictions being lifted.

Facebook's own survey notes that online groups saw a significant rise in engagement in 2020:

"Just over three-quarters (76.7%) of people surveyed say the most important group they are part of now operates online (44.3% primarily online, plus 32.4% both online and offline.) Also, 70% said digital tools were very important for helping their communities thrive during the pandemic. This increased participation in online community groups is here to stay: 86% of people whose most important community group is primarily online say they'll continue engaging with that group at the same level (48%), or even more frequently (39%) over the next 12 months."

Online groups can also help foster a sense of belonging, with 98% of respondents reporting a strong sense of community and kinship within their groups.



## Community engagement

We need to focus our community outreach on tailoring our messages and getting them to the audiences in these groups, as this is where people will really listen and engage. Residents in these closed groups are receptive to information shared from key members of the community, and they are more likely to engage with it than with content posted from a public-sector account. Our intention is to continue to work with community champions and the admins of these groups to build relationships that allow our messages to be shared with these communities.

The Our Manchester Engagement Framework will play an important role in this too – working with the team to develop good relationships in communities, continually learning, and measuring our success against the framework.



We will actively continue to build relationships across our neighbourhoods and community social-media accounts. We also need to build these relationships to understand what content works best for them and develop trust with the admins of these groups. We need to use the knowledge of our Neighbourhoods colleagues to give us the insight on the ground.

We have built great relationships with a number of the big Facebook community groups; they are:

- South Manchester and Wythenhawe
- Central Manchester
- North Manchester
- Wythenshawe, Chorlton Group, Didsbury
- Levy Massive, Gorton M18 Place of all Places!

While there are community Facebook groups in north Manchester, they are a lot smaller and a lot less active than the above groups. These are the main ones with the biggest followings. We have begun to work with these groups, and when we have developed a successful model with good relationships with the administrators, we can build on this work and replicate the model with more groups across the city. We do recognise that there are particular areas with issues around digital exclusion, and pockets of our communities are made up of harder-to-reach groups. We will work closely with our Neighbourhoods teams, the Our Manchester

Engagement team and partner networks on an approach to reach these areas, so we are as inclusive as we can be. We acknowledge that we need to assess each project on a case-by-case basis and develop an appropriate strategy to meet each project's objectives.

As part of our work to reach local communities through social media, we will also work closely with our Neighbourhoods colleagues running Manchester City Council Twitter accounts. This will ensure that they have key campaign information and the skills and knowledge to share this with audiences in their local areas.

COMMUNITY  
CHAMPIONS  
ARE MIGHTY!

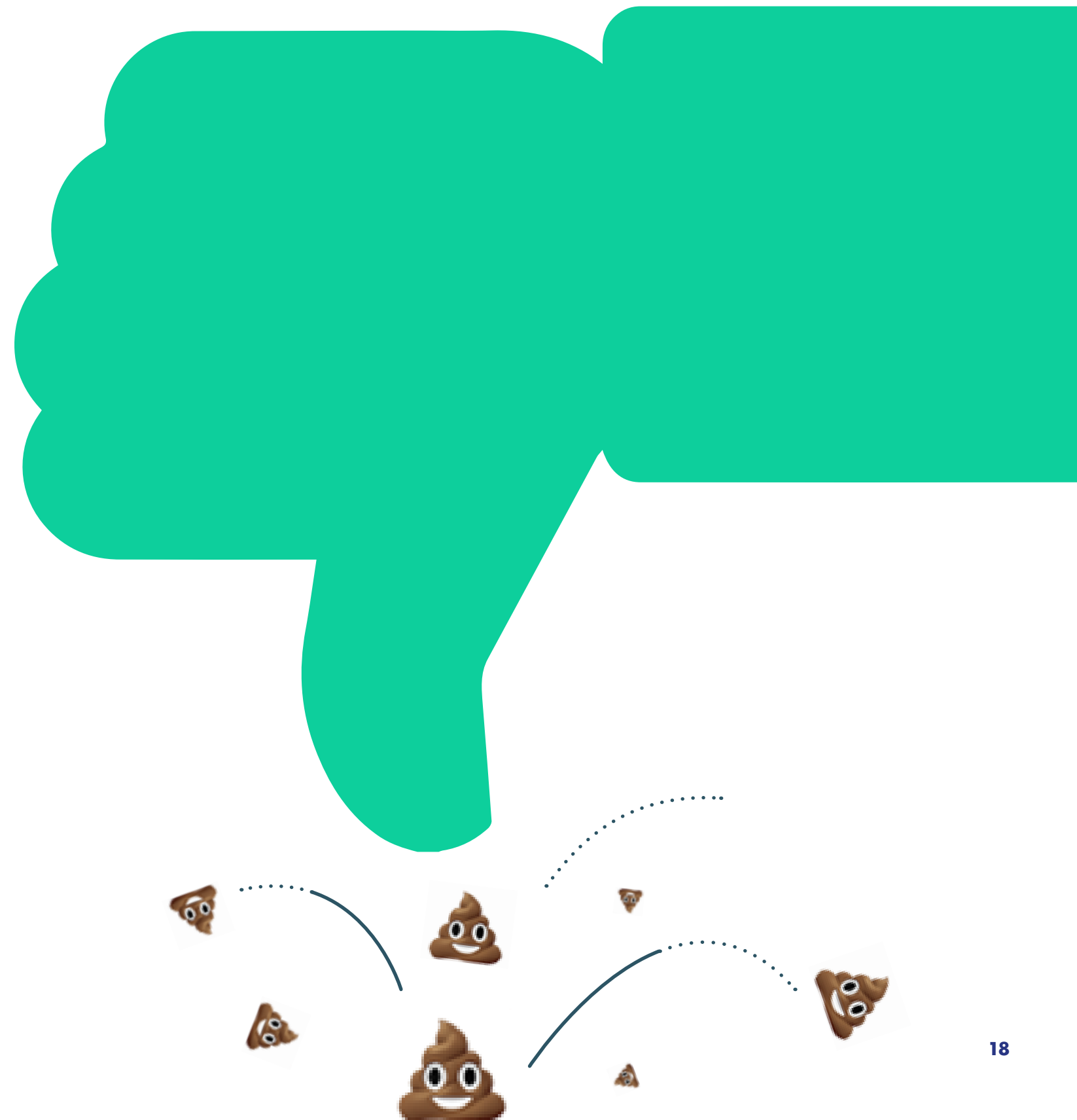


## 5. Myth-busting and misinformation

The Coronavirus pandemic has shed light on the amount of misinformation shared across social media. We've seen this in the form of myths and conspiracy theories about the virus, and through the anti-vax rhetoric discussed widely on all platforms. As a public service we have a responsibility to ensure that inaccurate and misleading comments on our posts are dealt with appropriately and we aren't providing a space for people to spread misinformation or fake news. We recognise people's freedom of speech and don't censor our social media when we see a comment we simply disagree with, but where comments are perpetuating a damaging narrative; for instance about the safety of the Covid vaccine we have a responsibility to hide comments and block users where we feel appropriate, as well as reporting users where necessary. We will also use our social listening and evaluation tools to gauge what our residents are discussing, giving us a chance to myth-bust through proactive content.

We will continue to counter misinformation through the regular community toolkits we share with local groups, offering accurate information and graphics that can be easily shared through their own channels, eg. WhatsApp – a platform where we know the sharing of misinformation is particularly rife.

COMBAT THE  
SPREADING  
OF  
MISINFORMATION



## 6. Partners and influencers

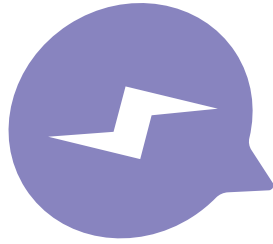
As a council we work closely with a number of partners across Greater Manchester – GMP, TfGM, the GMCA, and health teams including MHCC and the GMHSC Partnership. We work closely with businesses and charitable organisations in the city and also support and amplify the content of other Council social accounts, including our libraries, galleries and neighbourhood ward accounts.

We are part of a network of partners who work together to improve the lives of people in Manchester, and closely monitoring our partner channels for content we can amplify and engage with is an important part of our social-media approach. We will not be afraid to retweet or share a campaign rather than post the content ourselves. We achieve the same thing by retweeting a post, and in doing so we are supporting partners who will in turn support our future campaigns. We will move away from automatically scheduling large packs of social-media assets sent to us by partners, and look at smarter ways of working together and supporting one other.



### **Strong working relationships**

We will work smarter to organise our feeds into a mixture of good-quality original content and carefully thought through retweets and shares. We will actively engage with key partners to help support the delivery of our messages and support the delivery of theirs. Where appropriate we can add our voice to the conversation 'quote retweeting' or by sharing a comment on Facebook. This function gives us the chance to share valuable content with our audience while joining the conversation ourselves and explaining why it is relevant to our audience.



Working closely with partners means we also have access to multiple voices on social media, and we can use these to our advantage to deliver messages to our audience in different ways. For example, we would choose to retweet Greater Manchester Police warnings about the dangers of illegal raves rather than posting these messages ourselves. GMP have a harder and more enforcement-focused tone of voice, and on this occasion amplifying their messages rather than posting our own would be a more powerful and effective way of getting the message across.

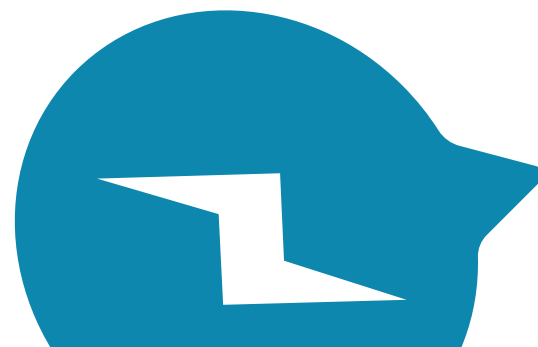
We will also focus our attention on key influencers within the social-media community: people who will be advocates for our content by adding their voice to the conversation to amplify our messages. We will do this by closely monitoring their content and the kinds of issues they are talking about and asking them to support our content, where appropriate.



REMEMBER THOSE  
INFLUENCERS?

Our list of partners and accounts we amplify is extensive, but here is a snapshot:

- GMCA
- TfGM
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
- Manchester Health and Care Commissioning
- GMHSC Partnership
- CityCo
- Marketing Manchester
- Manchester Piccadilly
- The University of Manchester
- Manchester Metropolitan University
- Visit Manchester
- MIF
- Manchester Pride
- Greater.jobs
- Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce.

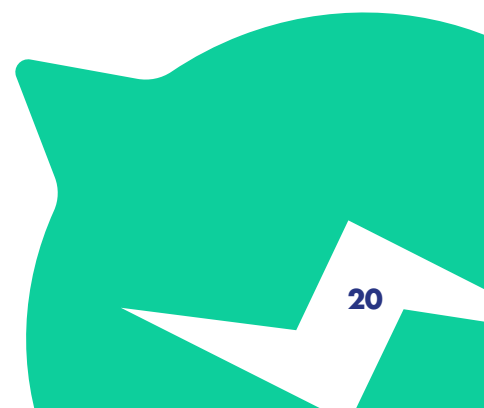


LET'S  
**AMPLIFY**  
ALL OUR FRIENDS!

On top of these we are actively building relationships across the independent sector with voluntary groups, support services and charities that support our aims and our people.

Some of these are:

- McrActive
- Shelter
- Jobcentre Plus
- Recycle for Greater Manchester
- One Manchester
- Mustard Tree
- Caribbean African Health Network
- Climate Emergency Manchester
- Bread and Butter Thing
- Coffee4Craig
- MACC
- Young Manchester
- Manchester Youth Lives
- The Growth Company
- LGBT Foundation
- FareShare Greater Manchester
- Booth Centre.





## 7. Social-media specialists

To establish this unique and recognisable tone of voice on social media and successfully evaluate and gather insight, we have remodelled the structure of our social-media team and how we work. To drive engagement we have recognised we need dedicated social-media specialists gatekeeping our channels. This is crucial to the success of this strategy.

While we have generic role profiles across our team, we have recognised that there is value in 'specialists' with skills focused on particular areas of communications. We have social media specialists within the marketing team and we need to use their strengths to ensure our social media channels are effectively managed.



WE'LL

MAKE

OUR

POSTS

MAGIC

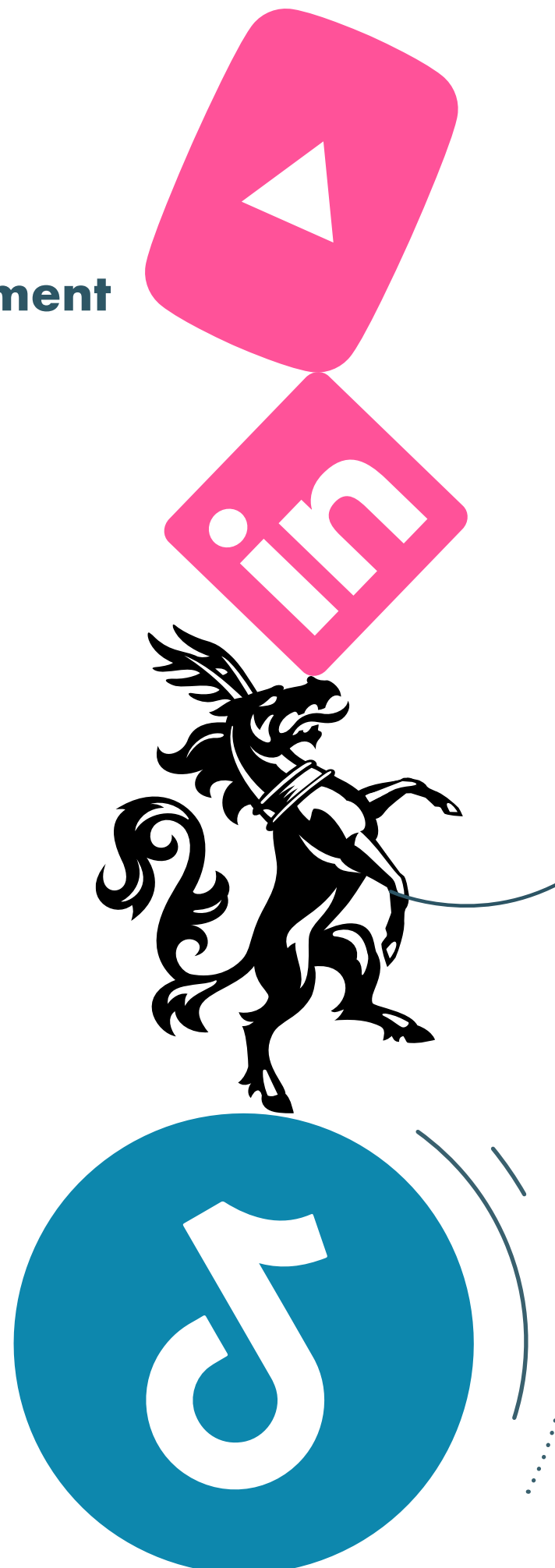
Having all social-media content coming through specialists will ensure consistency and get us closer to reaching our objectives. We have specialists who live and breathe social media, who at any point can tell us what is and what isn't being talked about in Manchester, what's performing well on our channels and what conversations we need to get involved in. They are genuinely interested in social media and will take content and adapt its style and tone so it's right for our audience. They won't be afraid to tell the team if something isn't going to work, and they will always look for the most creative treatment for a piece of content.





## 8. Training and development

Training and ongoing development of the team continues to be an important part of implementing our strategy. Our social-media specialists are committed to ongoing professional development to keep abreast of trends and changes across the world of social media so we can continue to adapt and improve our approach.



As a team we have already committed to expanding our knowledge with the Social Media Managers Academy course and with members of the team taking on apprenticeships and degree apprenticeships in digital marketing. We have also been making the most of numerous free webinars and workshops for social-media professionals that have been taking place during the pandemic; we will continue to take these opportunities as they arise, as well as make the most of training available through our PRCA membership.

WE CAN ALL  
LEARN A FEW NEW  
TRICKS, YOU KNOW!

DON'T KEEP IT  
TO YOURSELF!

We will share insights from any training with the wider team and ensure we are clearly demonstrating how we are putting this training into practice. We will also use our knowledge to share tips and training with councillors and colleagues across the Council who run their own social-media channels.





## 9. Content creation

We are lucky enough to have an incredibly talented design studio on hand to support us in creating impressive content for social media, including graphics, animations and videos. Over the years, our studio has created some amazing creative product that has performed well on social media, but it is important to acknowledge that this approach to content isn't a failsafe way of ensuring great engagement.

We can work with our designers to create a highly polished piece of content that then doesn't perform very well, while an off-the-cuff comment, GIF or graphic created with CANVA can spark great conversation and engagement. It really comes down to our social-media team knowing when we need something polished and when something simpler will do the same job. The quality in our 'quality over quantity' approach could be a humorous thread drafted up quickly to explain an issue, or a video interview crudely shot on a mobile phone. The 'quality' is in these posts being well timed and targeted to the right audience in the right place at the right time. Sometimes we may not even need to create or draft anything; simply having an awareness of what is trending and happening around us could be enough for us to jump in and spark great conversation.

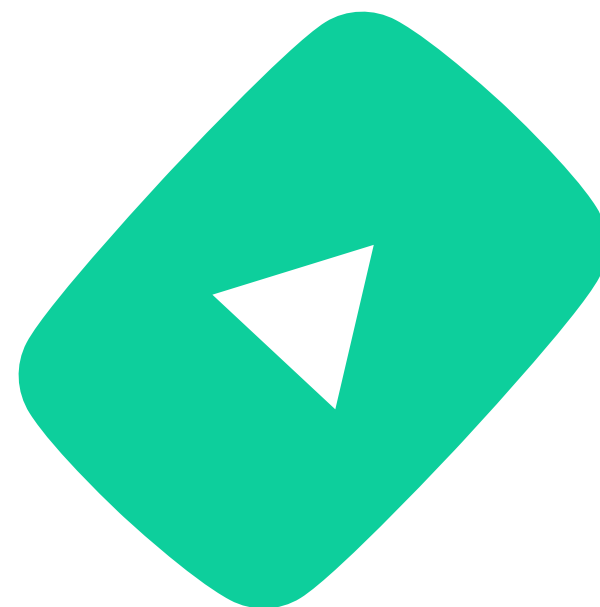
We will also work closely with our colleagues in the Contact Centre, using monthly meetings to understand the queries and concerns they have received from the public, and using these insights to inform and adapt our content.

### Content-sharing

We work closely with services across the Council to share content, and this is something we will continue to build on. We will make the most of content other services create, eg. imagery and videos of our amazing parks, case studies from our Children's Services and Work and Skills colleagues, and the wealth of content created by our Libraries and Galleries teams. This is valuable content that we have readily available, and we are supporting and augmenting the work of our colleagues by sharing it. We will also continue to share the content we create with other Council teams in the form of toolkits that include messages and graphics easily shared with colleagues in services, which they can use on their own social channels to reach communities. We will also create content specifically for other groups to use where we know we want to reach their audience, the content we create won't always feature our logo or be identifiable as ours.



The Council has recently launched a brand-new intranet. We are working to explore how we can share our social-media content through the new platform. It will enable us to share content with our staff, giving them access to key messages and allowing them to share our content. Not only will they be able to do this in their roles as Council staff, but also as Manchester residents, as we know that half of our workforce live in the city.



## Working at the council

Annual and flex leave

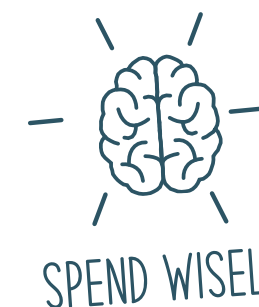
Health and Wellbeing

Starters and leavers



## 10. Paid-for social posts

Paid-for social posts or adverts are an undeniably important way of making a strong impact on our audience. The sheer volume of voices on social media combined with the battle against algorithms means organic posting alone is no longer enough to keep our audience mindful of our messages. Paid-for social posts allow us to target the specific people who we want to read a specific message. They are also a much cheaper way of reaching our target audience than traditionally printed home advertising, and are clearly measurable through evaluation data.



### Value for money

Paid-for social posts will continue to be an important part of our social-media approach, but it is important that we use them strategically. We shouldn't be putting money behind poor-quality content as a quick way of reaching more people, or boosting a post simply because it hasn't performed very well. Any paid-for content needs to be high quality and engaging to ensure a return on our investment.

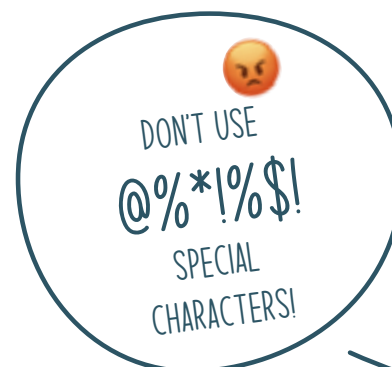


## 11. Accessibility, equality and diversity

Manchester has many diverse communities and it is crucial that our social-media content can be accessed and understood by them all, including those people with a visual, hearing, speech, motor, cognitive or other impairment. We are already taking steps to ensure our social-media content is accessible, such as by adding subtitles to all our video content and writing social-media posts in plain English. However, we need to build on this and continue improving accessibility to ensure we aren't alienating any of our audience.

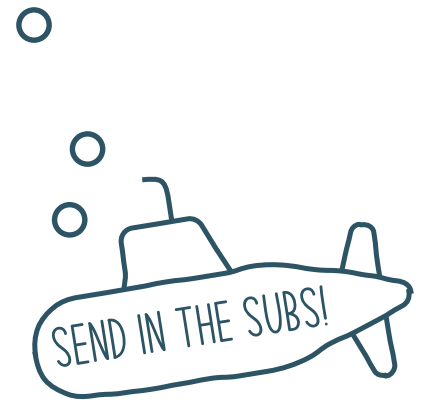
We recognise that this will be an ongoing challenge as new platforms and technologies emerge, and we will need to adapt as people's needs change. We may not get it 100% right every time, but through ongoing training and development we will make a commitment to adopting good habits and following emerging best practice.

MAKE IT  
WORK  
FOR  
EVERYONE!



We commit to:

- Ensuring all video content is subtitled
- Applying best practice on font sizes and colour contrast when designing video captions
- Using the alt text function on Orlo to ensure any important information in an image is described in alternative text for visually impaired users. (This is particularly important when sharing quote tiles created in Canva featuring a lot of text we are unable to include in the accompanying social-media post)
- Working closely with our studio to ensure any creative product designed for social-media campaigns meets accessibility guidelines
- Using plain English, simplifying messages and keeping sentences as short as possible
- Avoiding large chunks of text and using line breaks in our social-media posts to spread out our copy and make it easier to read
- Avoiding using bold, italicised or capitalised text in our posts; this can make things more difficult to read
- Avoiding using non-standard symbols, eg. mathematical symbols, as substitutes for words and messages – these can confuse screen-reading software.



# REPRESENT AND CELEBRATE OUR AMAZING COMMUNITIES!

During our response to the COVID-19 pandemic we have also been creating more translated pieces of content in different languages, including British Sign Language, as well as creating audio content. This has allowed more of our communities to access vital information, and this is something we will continue to focus and build on. We have been working with partners including Breakthrough UK to provide accessible formats for residents with learning disabilities. We plan to identify training and development solutions within our team to support this work in the future, and understand best practice in these areas.

We work hard to ensure our social-media messages speak to all our residents and our diverse communities across Manchester. In order to ensure our social-media messages are resonating with our audience, our audience need to be able to see themselves represented and celebrated in our content. We are committed to integrating diversity, equity and inclusion into all our social-media campaigns.

We will do this by:

- Using imagery on social media that reflects the diversity within our city, including race, gender, age, disability and sexual orientation
- Continuing to build on our use of translated materials in our communications, including the use of British Sign Language
- Marking and celebrating a range of religious moments and cultural festivals.



## 12. Evaluation

We know evaluation is vital to demonstrate the value and impact of our work in Communications, and this same thinking needs to be applied to our social-media campaigns. Social media is fast-paced and reactive, but we need to take the time to pause and reflect on our outputs, to ensure they are meeting the objectives of this strategy as well as our Communications and organisational objectives as a whole.

Historically, we have shared reports detailing lots of numbers: retweets, shares, likes and interactions. Yet it's arguable that these methods of measurement don't mean very much if we can't put a number on what 'good engagement' is. We can certainly highlight 'good engagement for us' and figures definitely have their place. We should be highlighting when posts have received a notable amount of likes or shares, but we will move beyond vanity metrics and start compiling reports with tangible examples of the real impact our social-media content is having and how this informs our work in the future.



IT'S NOT JUST  
ABOUT NUMBERS  
YOU KNOW.

As part of our ongoing work informed by this strategy, we will provide monthly dashboard reports. These will measure:

- Positive conversations we've had and the outcomes of these
- Resolution of issues, both in the social-media inbox and publicly
- 'Brand' sentiment – the trust people show us, their attitude and the feelings they have about us
- Direct actions as a result of social content – link clicks, sign-ups etc
- Content highlights – what worked, what didn't, and why
- 'Competitor' analysis – what have our counterparts done well or not so well that month?
- Who has been talking about us and what have they been saying – informed by social listening
- How we have worked with members, Council teams and colleagues
- How we have supported partners and how they have supported us
- How we have worked with influencers and advocates
- How we have worked with closed community groups
- Investment and impact of paid activity.



# Finishing up!

## Conclusion: Where we'll be

This strategy is ambitious, and embodies the Our Manchester behaviours.

We are proud of Manchester and passionate about the work we do. The social-media landscape is fluid and this strategy should be too. We will review and update it every six months. We will listen to our audience, learning and responding by adapting our approach when we need to. Through social media we will continue to build relationships and start conversations to improve the lives of everyone who visits, lives in or works in Manchester.

WE'LL KEEP  
↓  
LISTENING,  
↓  
REVIEWING,  
↓  
LEARNING  
↓  
& RESPONDING



AND WE'LL KNOW IF  
WE'RE DOING OKAY 🤔

We will measure our success against the following outcomes:

- More engaged audiences, wherever and whoever they are
- Dedicated social-media team organising our channels and sharing skills and knowledge with the wider team
- A reduced amount of content being shared on every channel, leaving our corporate channels less confused and cluttered – using our channels in the right way for the right messages
- Increased traffic from social media to Manchester.gov.uk

- Proactively working with others to organise and share our content – partners, influencers and trusted community figures
- Open and ongoing conversations with key advocates in community Facebook groups
- Engagement and discussion around Council messages in community Facebook groups
- Behaviour changes as a result of our social-media campaigns, eg. recycling/quitting smoking
- Greater trust of the Council and our messages – measured by sentiment-tracking and social listening.

AND WE'LL GET IT RIGHT, BECAUSE

WE LOVE IT!!!





MANCHESTER  
CITY COUNCIL

April 2021

